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GERMANY.

*Report from Berlin—Plague and cholera in various countries.*BERLIN, GERMANY, *January 20, 1902.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit the following information, obtained from the imperial health office at Berlin:

Plague.

TURKEY.—According to a report dated January 7, a case of plague has been registered at Beirut.

EGYPT.—On December 27, 1901, 4 new cases and 2 deaths were recorded in Egypt, viz, 3 cases (1 death) in Tantah and 1 case (1 death) in Ziftah.

BRITISH INDIA.—During the week ended December 13, 1901, there were registered in the Bombay Presidency 6,958 new plague cases and 5,145 deaths—that is to say, 654 cases and 599 deaths less than during the foregoing week. In the city of Bombay during the same period there occurred 206 new cases and 141 deaths. Besides these, 141 deaths were designated as suspected plague. The total mortality of the city decreased from 841 deaths in the previous week to 776.

Plague and cholera.

BRITISH INDIA.—In Calcutta during the period from December 1 to December 7, 48 deaths from cholera were recorded. There also occurred 31 plague cases and 30 deaths.

Cholera.

DUTCH INDIA.—In the district of Soerabaya there were registered between November 17 and November 30, 660 cases of cholera and 457 deaths.

Respectfully,

FRANK H. MASON,
United States Consul-General.

The SURGEON-GENERAL,
U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.

[Synopsised translation.]

The occurrence of plague among ship-borne rats and its epidemiological importance, with chart.

[By government-councillor, Prof. H. Kossel, member of the imperial health office at Berlin, and Dr. Nocht, medical officer at the port of Hamburg.]

During recent years single cases as well as great outbreaks of the plague have repeatedly occurred, in which there was no evidence to show that the infectious stuff was introduced by human beings, so that it had to be assumed that the transmission had taken place in another manner. The circumstance that in those countries smitten with the pestilence the seaports were the first to be attacked and that the origin of the disease was almost invariably traced to the immediate vicinity of the docks, certainly seemed to indicate that the sea traffic was in some way connected with the introduction of the disease. But in what manner this sea traffic participated in the spread of the plague, without the medium of human plague patients, hitherto only the merest suppositions could be entertained.

If we follow the plague on the course it has taken, after it had descended from its mountain home in the interior of the Asiatic Conti-

nent to the coast, and since in 1894 by its outbreak in Hongkong it made its appearance at the gates of the world's traffic, we observe how it first spread out toward the west and subsequently in the most different directions, now creeping slowly from place to place and then suddenly appearing at great distances in the most remote parts of the earth.

During the first two years it was confined to places in East Asia, in 1896 it took root in India, and in the fall of the same year it made an advance toward London. Happily, no further infection resulted from the cases of the 2 stewards on a steamship arriving in London from India, or from the cases which later repeatedly occurred. The insignificant progress which the plague at first made in India and in Arabia, so ill-famed in former times, seemed to encourage the hope that the slight durability of the plague-infectious matter outside of the human body was unfavorable to the transmission of the disease over great distances, but after Madagascar had been infected in 1898, the year 1899 brought the news of its appearance on 3 other continents, namely, Africa (Alexandria and Lourenco Marquez), South America (Asuncion, Rosario, Santos), and, finally, Europe (Oporto and South Russia). Japan, too (in whose territory, Formosa, since 1894, serious plague epidemics had been raging), was attacked (Kobe and Osaka), as well as the Sandwich Islands and New Caledonia. Finally, during the past year, the pestilence advanced to Australia, took root in the summer of 1900 again upon European soil, in Glasgow, and in recent times spread out in South Africa. The number of seaports in which, during the past year, vessels with plague patients on board have entered without causing further infection is considerable.

We note, therefore, that the plague in its wanderings follows, for the most part, the routes of the great sea traffic and takes root in seaports, while the spread of the pestilence inland only takes place very slowly or not at all, if it is not assisted by a wholesale flight, as in India, where the disease was thus spread out over a large territory in a brief space of time. Nevertheless, people in India have often been surprised to observe that the introduction of the plague by human beings has, even under unfavorable hygienic conditions, remained without further consequences. The same thing has happened in European ports, even where the persons infected were not immediately rendered harmless by isolation, because of the nature of their disease remaining unrecognized. In those ports, however, in which the plague had developed into an epidemic, the disease could hardly ever be traced to the arrival of a plague patient. Generally, the source of the infection remained undiscovered.

Inasmuch as there are in ocean vessels more or less large numbers of rats on board, and the epidemiological observations of the past years have taught us that these animals are susceptible to plague and can easily transmit the disease to other animals of their kind, a suspicion had certainly existed from the very beginning that the rats had played a part in the introduction of the plague in the cases last mentioned.

To take a few examples from recent times, the origin of the plague in Oporto was traced by the German bacteriologists, sent to investigate the occurrence of the pestilence, to transmission by means of sick or dead rats, and in Sydney the cause of the epidemic of plague in 1900 was also considered to be the rats suffering with this disease. Furthermore, the plague cases which occurred on the English steamer *Highland Prince* in the fall of 1900 can hardly be otherwise explained than by

the assumption that plague among the ship rats had preceded the outbreak.

Recently 2 ships have arrived in European ports, on which rat plague was clearly proved to exist. Cases of plague among the people on board, however, were not ascertained. Both point to Smyrna as the suspected source of infection. They show clearly enough the danger which threatens our ports through the ship-borne rats.

Chart showing course of plague since 1894.

BERLIN, GERMANY, *November 26, 1901.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a chart published by the imperial health office at Berlin, showing the course of the plague since 1894. The map was included as an illustration in the article: "The plague among ship-borne rats and its epidemiological importance," by Professor Kossell of the imperial health office and Dr. Nocht, physician at the port of Hamburg, appearing in volume 18 of the works of the said office, and of which a synopsis is forwarded. The dotted red line indicates the steamship routes. A *cross* stands for a single case and a *dot* indicates an epidemic, the various periods being shown by the different colors, viz, blue, yellow, green, red, and black. A small circle within a larger one means endemic center.

Referring to the chart, the authors of the article say:

"If we follow the plague on the way it has taken, after it had descended from its mountain home into the interior of the Asiatic Continent, thence to the coast, and since 1894, when it broke out in Hongkong and appeared at the doors of the world's traffic, we next watch how it spread out toward the west and then, in the most different directions, at one time slowly crawling from place to place, at another suddenly appearing in remote corners of the earth."

Hoping the map may be of some interest to you,

Respectfully,

FRANK H. MASON,
United States Consul-General.

The SURGEON-GENERAL,
U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.

HAWAII.

Report of quarantine on outgoing vessels.

HONOLULU, H. I., *January 21, 1902.*

SIR: I have the honor to report the outgoing quarantine transactions at this port for the week ended January 18, 1902, as follows: Number of steamers inspected and passed, 2; number of sailing vessels inspected and passed, 7; number of cabin passengers inspected and passed, 50; number of steerage passengers inspected and passed, 56; number of crew inspected and passed, 128; number of pieces of baggage disinfected, 105; number of sailing vessels disinfected, 7; number of inter-island steamships disinfected, 2; number of wharves fumigated, 1.

Respectfully,

L. E. COFER,
*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.,
Chief Quarantine Officer, Hawaii.*

The SURGEON-GENERAL,
U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.